

PRESIDENT ASKS UNION HEADS TO CONSIDER PUBLIC

BY DAVID LAWRENCE.
(Special Correspondent of The News Scimitar.)

WASHINGTON, Feb. 14.—President Wilson sat in an invalid's chair on the south porch of the White House yesterday and endeavored to persuade representatives of the railroad brotherhoods that they must consider the public interest and not tie up the transportation system of the country with a strike. And these probably will not.

Four men in heavy winter overcoats gathered around the president and talked earnestly with him about the situation in their respective unions. The president joked with them and seemed in excellent spirits.

His visitors told him they had been missing him in the last six months and hoped he would be getting back into active work soon.

Mr. Wilson, appreciative of their solicitude, said he hoped so, too, as he was eager to summon all the strength he could for all the battles ahead of him in the next few months.

Mr. Wilson had his decision prepared in writing and read it to the representatives of the brotherhoods. They took it away with them for consideration, promising an answer in 24 hours.

The railroad men told correspondents afterward that the president "looked well," and seemed alert mentally. Their interview was a brief one—not more than five or ten minutes—and the first conference Mr. Wilson has had in many weeks. It has been months since he received any visitors, his visits having been confined to cabinet officers and one or two senators.

Not Much of a Strain.

The visit of the railroad men was not much of a strain, however, as the president, in consultation with Director-General Hines, had a memorandum ready for the spokesman of the brotherhoods.

As a matter of fact, the whole railroad controversy has the appearance of stage-play. Within a fortnight the railroads are to go back to private control. The railroad employees fear reduction in wages, or at least no further advances in wages.

They have succeeded in persuading the conferees of the senate and house to omit the anti-strike provisions of railroad legislation and provide for voluntary settlement of future disputes. But they fail to see why congress should be providing a high guarantee of dividends to the owners of railroad stocks and at the same time no provision is made for increases in wages to them.

The unsoundness of the claim is, however, explained by officials of the railroad administration who say the owners of securities will be getting relatively less for the money they get on dividends than the railroad brotherhoods out of their wages.

There is, indeed, a good deal of restlessness among the shop laborers and classes of workmen engaged in maintenance of way, and a strike among them is still being threatened, though it would not necessarily tie up all the railroads.

Planned Demonstration.

But the threat to strike and the discussion at this time between the railroad brotherhood and Director-General Hines, coupled with the visit to the White House, is part of a carefully planned demonstration that the railroad brotherhoods under private control are not going to be denied the advantages they have enjoyed under government operation.

It must not be forgotten that President Wilson can exercise the veto power over railroad legislation now pending, and that the Democrats have already shown a disposition to fight certain features of the bill as agreed to by the conferees of senate and house.

The railroad brotherhoods said they had been missing the president. Quite true. No more devoted friend of the railroad men has appeared, unless it was Director-General William G. McAdoo. The president has been sympathetic—some people think too sympathetic—since the days when he practically forced congress to accept the Adamson eight-hour law.

But friendly as he has been, he could not promise the railroad brotherhoods any increase in wages here. All he could do was to pledge his interest in seeing that such a commission as may be appointed to study the wage question would be urged to meet their claims justly.

Some equalization of railroad wages as between different classes has been admitted as just by the railroad administration officials and in passing the question off to the private owners some such recommendation is not at all unlikely.

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Near U. S. Coast

Here is another deadly mine picked up recently off the New Jersey coast by American mine sweepers. These mines were planted by hundreds all along the Atlantic coast and caused the loss of several small vessels. The mine-sweeping fleet, however, has at last rid the waters of them. The photo shows the hydrostat, which controls the depth at which the mine floats.

Farm Census Drags With Many Farmers Living In Cities

WASHINGTON, Feb. 14.—Farm enumerating work under the agricultural census is dragging. It was stated at the census bureau today, because so many farmers live in the city in the winter and are not on the farms when the enumerators call.

Completion of the agricultural census had been expected by officials within the next two weeks, but recent reports indicated that inability to reach many farm owners, coupled with bad weather conditions, which have completely halted the census in some districts, farming statistics will not be completed for another two months.

SCENIC HIGHWAY MEETING CALLED

A meeting of the directors of the Mississippi River Scenic Highway association has been called for Feb. 27 by Thomas B. King, manager of the highway department of the chamber of commerce, who is also president of the association.

The meeting will be held in St. Louis and arrangements will be made at that time to send special representatives into Arkansas and Missouri south of Memphis to locate the route of the highway where it has not yet been determined.

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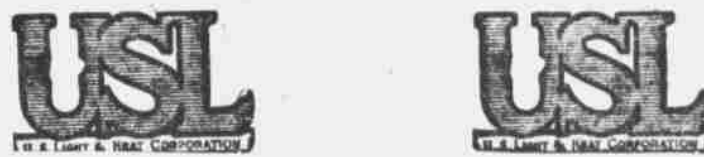
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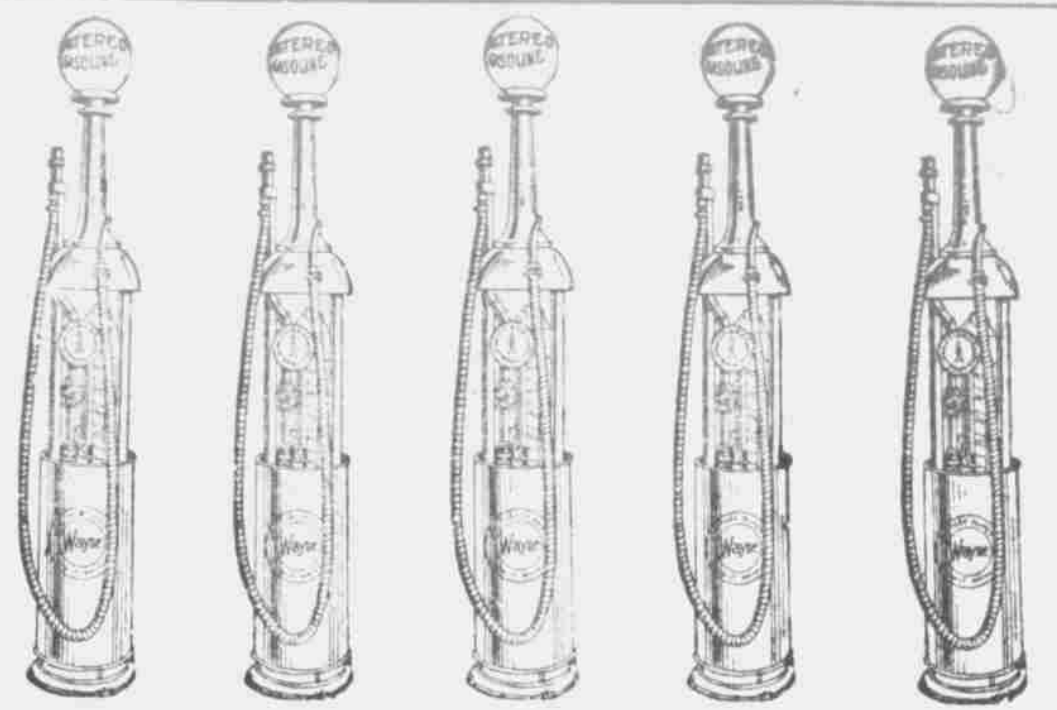
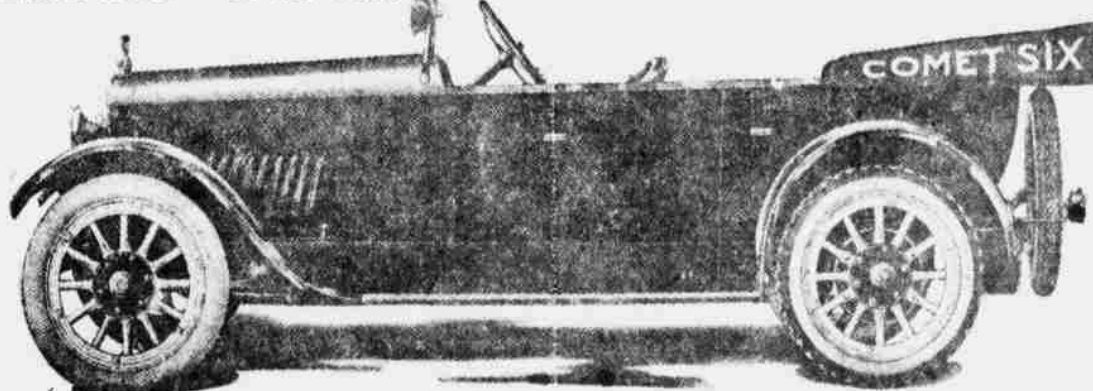
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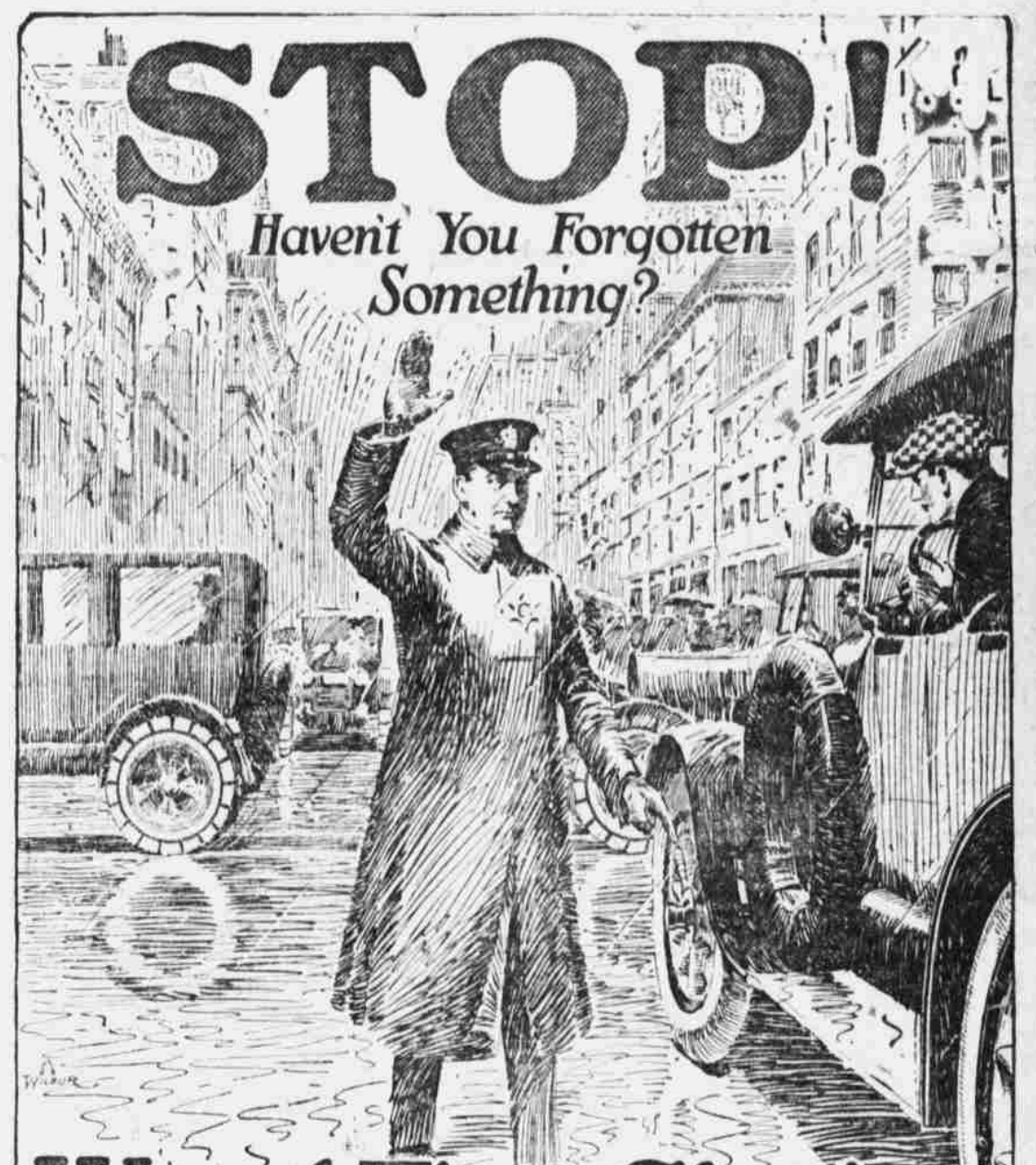
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